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Whiting's effort is to interpret more especially the characteristics, and friendships, and manifold interests of Mr. and Mrs. Browning, in their enthusiasm for Italy, their views of life, their devotion to poetic art, and the wide range of their friendships. The period in which they lived was one of the most brilliant in

contemporary genius; and their circle included Wordsworth, Landor, Tennyson, Rossetti, Milnes, Trollope, Leighton, Millais, Jowett, Harriet Hosmer, the Storys, the Hawthornes, Margaret Fuller, Mrs. Stowe, Ruskin, and many others of the immortals in literature and life. (Little, Brown and Company, Boston.)

THE LAST VIEW OF THE MARTYRED PRESIDENT

By L. C. BREED

INTEREST in everything pertaining to President Lincoln increases with the lapse of time, and it is, in a sense, a duty, as well as a privilege to add ever so little to the facts and particulars concerning him which are already in possession of the historian and through him, of the American nation that loved him so well in life and who so sacredly revere and preserve his memory in death.

On the occasion of a visit to Springfield, the martyred president's old home, the writer learned that a leading contractor superintended not only the building of the monument in Oak Ridge cemetery, but had the personal responsibility of the custody of the remains of President Lincoln from the time that he entered upon the work until the casket was removed from its temporary resting place and placed in the crypt beneath the monument which towers above it—having been during this interval, under bonds in the sum of fifty thousand dollars to the State of Illinois. To protect the body and to safe-guard himself, the contractor had private watchmen in charge of the premises night and day. As the contractor, during the war with Spain, had charge of a brigade, he enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens and the State authorities as to the character and efficiency of his provisions made in this important respect.

Wishing to learn some particulars concerning the circumstances incident to the

placing of the casket in its final resting place, I sought and obtained interesting information concerning the matter during my sojourn in the capital city.

When the metallic coffin was placed in the receptacle provided for it, the casket in which had been brought from Washington in the spring of 1865, was buried nearby, but only the custodian of the cemetery at that time knew the exact spot. It troubled the parties in charge of the work, because it would not be possible to avoid the risk of destroying the casket in the excavating necessary for the foundation of the monument.

One day one of the men came rushing to the superintendent as he came upon the ground, and told him that the steam shovel which bore prongs on its basket, had struck an object, which upon examining was found to be a casket, and the man was in great distress and horror at the accidental act of sacrilege of which he supposed he had been guilty. The superintendent at once reassured him by telling him this was undoubtedly the empty Washington casket, and on making a careful examination found this to be the case.

"What disposition," I inquired, "was made of this casket?" "The superintendent took charge of it," said my informant, "and removed three of the beautiful and costly handles. In spite of the care bestowed upon the custody of the casket, one other was removed and stolen. Of the three one was given to the

State, one to the custodian of the cemetery, and the superintendent reserved the other. Later on the casket was buried in a niche provided for it under one of the corners of the crypt, twenty-two feet below the surface, and no one but the superintendent and the men who did the work, knew the exact location."

"I have heard that Robert Lincoln feared the remains might be disturbed and saw the contractor with regard to the matter."

"Yes, that is so. One day he and Governor Yates called on the company and Mr. Lincoln, in explaining the object of his visit, stated that he wished to learn the expense of enclosing the casket in a steel case, similar to the method employed in case of Mr. Pullman's remains, the engineer's plans for which he would furnish and the expense of providing he would bear personally."

He was informed that it would probably cost one thousand dollars.

"Very well," said Mr. Lincoln, "I would like this to be done."

"At this juncture, the governor, who stood a little in the rear of Mr. Lincoln, made a sign signifying his assumption of the matter in behalf of the State, at least that was the way it was understood, and it so turned out."

"Did Mr. Lincoln make any criticism concerning the original provision for the protection of his father's remains?"

"Why, he was asked, in effect, something bearing on the matter, and he replied it was not to protect the body from ghoul, but to safe-guard it from his friends. He went on to state that his father's body had already been moved fourteen times and he wished to know beyond peradventure, that the difficulty and expense of so doing would be so great, it would act as a deterrent, at least during his own life-time."

"I have heard this contractor was the last man who gazed on the features of the dead president."

"Well—not exactly, for though he was present and in charge, one of the two

plumbers he engaged to open the leaden coffin, in sealing the opening, was actually the last person who saw or will ever see his face. There was, in fact, an attempt made to contest this privilege on the part of these two men, and the contractor interfered. He ordered an opening cut about a foot and a half long at the head of the coffin. The aperture was made by drilling at the top and sides and turning up the cutting like a hinge."

"Was the body in a good state of preservation?"

"Remarkably, since the features were easily recognizable, showing that the process of embalming in April, 1865, had been skilfully performed."

"A transparent white film covered the features and rendered them reasonably natural, in spite of the fact that a careful examination showed the skin to be quite yellow. The beard, at the ends, was slightly curly, and had the appearance of having grown since death, as it did not in this respect exactly resemble well known likenesses taken just before death. His cravat and vest were also in a remarkable state of preservation, intact and glossy, but the silken pillow on which the head rested was badly decayed. The chin was slightly elevated as if, in some way, the coffin had been subjected to a jar."

"Besides President Lincoln, his wife and children are buried beneath the monument, are they not?"

"Yes, and provision is made for Robert Lincoln and family. In order to furnish Mr. Lincoln with documentary evidence of this fact, the contractor wrote him, formally, advising him of it, though it is hardly probable any use will need to be made of his letter."

"How long a time had elapsed since the body was embalmed and the time when it was viewed?"

"A little more than thirty-seven years. A few years longer than in case of Napoleon,* when his body was viewed at St. Helena."

The writer's earliest visit to Springfield was in the fall of 1865, when, as a

*When Napoleon's remains were viewed at St. Helena on the occasion of the removal of his body to France, it was found to be in a remarkable state of preservation and his features readily recognized.

It was noted that a slight growth of the beard had taken place, for Napoleon was always closely shaven.

lad, I was making a tour of the West. I first proceeded to the Lincoln home, and from thence to Oak Ridge cemetery. There I found a company of soldiers encamped for the purpose of guarding the receiving tomb of the cemetery, in which the remains of the president had temporarily been placed. The outer doors were thrown open and I stood and gazed through the iron bars of the inner gate into the tomb. Within almost arm's reach, the casket rested upon a bier, and a wreath of flowers lay upon it. Close by, alongside of his father, was a smaller casket containing the body of little Tad,—the pet name by which he was called by the great man in whose heart there was always an affectionate interest for all children.

Boy though I was at the time, I was old enough to measurably grasp the extent of the calamity of Mr. Lincoln's death to the nation and to experience and share with my elders, the sorrow so universally and deeply felt. As I reverently stood at the tomb and peered within, I felt a keener realization of the events of six months earlier than otherwise could have been my lot.

And now, after the lapse of forty-two years, the grown man wended his way again to the cemetery. On the occasion of my second visit, several soldiers were also at Oak Ridge to pay their respects and to gratify their desire to see the place where they had laid him whom the nation, and indeed the civilized world

delights to honor. From their appearance I readily was aware that no one of these men was born while the martyred president was living.

Later in the day, I met a gentleman who was at Springfield on a matter of business, and in speaking of my first visit, he told me he used to live at Springfield, and his home was near Mr. Lincoln's. The family of his father were intimate with their neighbors, and as a young lad he had often dined at Mr. Lincoln's home, prior to his election to the presidency.

Before leaving the city, I walked around to the Lincoln residence, which I found was being repaired. The State owns it, and having charge of the property, it will be carefully cared for and preserved as far as practicable, from the ravages of time.

Musing over the events of the day, the well known lines of President Lincoln's favorite poem came to mind:—

"O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave."

The Lincoln monument is ninety-eight feet high, from the ground line to apex. It has five crypts and a memorial hall. The cost was about half a million dollars.

HISTORIC FIREPLACES

By KATE ANDERSON WADSWORTH

PERHAPS it is because the fire on the hearth has almost gone out in New England that some of us cling so tenaciously to the homesteads, and visit them from time to time with renewed interest. Here we find the generous fireplaces about which the men

and women famed in history once gathered, as happy boys and girls.

They received their inspiration for strong, useful lives not alone from the glow of the burning logs, but also from the quiet presence of the "Serene Mother" knitting in the chimney corner.

